GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3934
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
INTERNET FACILITY IN HILLY AREAS
Narhire Smt. Kalpana Ramesh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to provide internet facility in the hilly areas of the country;

(b) if so, the time by when this target is likely to be achieved;

(c) the quantum of funds sanctioned for this purpose; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (c): Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited(BSNL) is already providing Internet service all over the country on local call basis including hilly areas. BSNL has planned an investment to the tune of Rs.11 crores for completing ongoing projects towards Internet service infrastructure in hilly areas.

In addition, Department of Information Technology (DIT) has taken up an initiative for setting up of Community Information Centres (CICs) in the hilly, far-flung areas of the country for socio-economic development of these regions. CICs are a citizen`s interface for IT enable e-government services and are provided with Internet connectivity through VSATs, computers and peripherals as per the following details:

(i) 487 CICs at block level have been set up in the 8 North Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim with outlay of Rs. 242 crores for 5 years. An amount of Rs. 141.62 crores has been released on the project since February, 2002. Project has been implemented by NIC/NICSI.

(ii) Based on the experiences of North Eastern States, DIT has taken up setting up of 135 CICs at block level in Jammu & Kashmir with outlay of Rs. 41.67 crores for 5 years. An amount of Rs. 24.96 crores has been released on the project since February, 2004. Project is being implemented by NIC/NICSI in two phases i.e. 60 CICs in the first phase by October, 2004 and remaining 75 CICs in the second phase by October, 2005.

(iii) DIT has taken up setting up of 41 CICs at Schools in Andamand & Nicobar, and 30 Schools in Lakshdweep Islands with outlay of Rs. 21.75 crores for 5 years. An amount of Rs. 5 crores has been released since February, 2005 on this project. Project is being implemented by ERNET India for establishing 71 CICs by December, 2005.

(iv) Setting up of 328 CICs (95 at block level and 233 at village level) are under review by Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance with outlay of Rs. 85.59 crores for 4 years.

(v) For other parts of the country, DIT is in the process of formulating a plan to facilitate establishment of Common Service Centres (CSCs) in rural areas across the country. For this purpose, draft guidelines have been prepared which aim to promote establishment of CSCs through appropriate Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Such Centres would have flexibility to offer a mix of services (from government and non-government including localized services) that may be needed by the local community.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) to (c) above.